The Early Postage Meter Stamps of Mainland China

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The Early Postage Meter Stamps of Mainland China

The development of postage meter use in China can be separated into three periods:

1) a long and cautious time of testing and experimentation which lasted from 1926 to 1948,
2) the 'classic' period from 1948 to the 1970s in which 48 imported machines were used in several large post offices, and
3) the modern period from the late 1970s to the present in which meter use expanded into thousands of post offices and businesses throughout the country.

This exhibit documents the test/experimental and classic periods.

As may be expected in an area as little explored as Chinese metered mail, locating examples from before the modern period is difficult. No dealers stock meter stamps per se. Most examples in the exhibit were found in the postal history sections of auctions and in dealers' stock priced according to rarity and usage of accompanying adhesive stamps on the covers. The essays and loose meter tapes were obtained from several of the very few meter stamp collections formed while the stamps were current. It is safe to say that even the most frequently found stamp types are rare compared to the relative abundance of traditional adhesive stamps, and a significant number are known by a single example. Of course what is unique today may be 'one of several known' tomorrow, but presently this material is difficult to find.

Rarity, of course, does not equal importance. The exhibit contains many covers of historical significance. One with foremost impact is the essay found immediately after the title page. It is the single earliest Chinese meter impression known and predates by two years what was once considered to be the first Chinese meter essay.

The Francotyp essay shown further along is also unique. Equally important is the cover franked by the first meter actually placed into use in China. Only three covers and a handful of cut-outs are known to exist today, all 2¢ denominations except the 5¢ example in the exhibit. Several other 'earliest known' and unique items are also present.

The most useful references are "The Postage Meter and Postpaid Machine Stamps of China" by the exhibitor, published by the China Stamp Society in 2000, and "The Early Postage Meters of Mainland China" by the exhibitor, published in "The Congress Book 1997" by the American Philatelic Congress in June 1997. An earlier reference is "The Postage Meters of China" by H.G. Morgan,
Meter Stamp Society
The Early Postage Meter Stamps of Mainland China

Before the 1970s only 48 postage meters were in use in all of China. By comparison, during the 1960s, several hundred thousand meters were being used in the United States.

Despite this minuscule number, a surprising variety of different meter stamp designs were needed because of changes in governments, currencies and inflation. Some designs were used for months by several machines while others existed for days only on a single meter.

This exhibit examines the seven basic designs and variations used on these 48 classic postage meters. It also shows the unadopted essays that preceded them.

This is a unique presentation of a previously unexplored area of Chinese postal development.

Early unadopted essays, 1926 – 1935

Frank with frame modeled on the Martyrs issue adhesive stamps of 1932/34.

1936

Universal Postal Frankers

Large frank with faux perforation frame. 1948

Pitney Bowes flying goose frank. 1948

Hasler flying goose frank. 1949

Pitney Bowes straight-line frank. 1957

Pitney Bowes small frank. 1957

Hasler straight-line frank. 1961
Early Unadopted Essays

The first attempt to design a postage meter stamp for China was made by Universal Postal Frankers of England on their "Midget-5" machine.

This strip, dated 6 May 1926, is the earliest Chinese postage meter artifact recorded.
The same Universal machine was tested again in 1929.

Flier for the Universal Midget
Early Unadopted Essays

In 1928 Universal created a second design for their “Midget-3” model.

All three denominations of the Midget-3
Early Unadopted Essays

Francotyp of Germany created a design for the China market in 1930. It did not succeed in fielding a machine in China.

Francotyp Model C unadopted essay, 17 May 1930. The only known example.

Illustration of a Francotyp C machine from a flier, 1928.
Early Unadopted Essays

In 1935, Universal shipped a single Multi-Value machine to Shanghai for evaluation.

One of three surviving impressions from the first Multi-Value test, 8 Oct. 1935.
Martyrs issue frame design

The first meter stamp actually used was modeled on the Martyrs issue adhesives of 1932/34. One meter was used in the Shanghai main post office in June and July 1936.

Proof from First Day of Use, annotated "Specimen of Approved Die"
Martyrs issue frame design

All five known postally used examples of the first issued meter stamp are 2¢ except for this 5¢ cover.
Martyrs issue frame design

The same machine used in the live test in 1936 was retested after World War 2 with a larger stamp design.

Essay with dollar sign below value

Proof of stamp as used with boxed 100 yuan suffix
Martyrs issue frame design

One of two known postally used examples with boxed 1000 yuan suffix.

Parcel post receipt, 24 June 1948
BA7 (better than one in catalog)
Universal, large frank

In 1947 thirty-six Universal Postal Frankers “Multi-Value” meters were delivered to China. The first essay design has a flying goose at top center.

These two covers are the only known examples of the essay.
Universal, large frank

The earliest issued version of the Universal “Flying Goose” has both a meter number and post office identification. It was used in two post offices, Shanghai No. 4 and Nanking No. 6, from 1 July to 23 Aug. 1948.

Shanghai to USA, 5 August 1948, paying the international airmail rate of Chinese National Currency $550,000 in effect 1-21 August 1948.
Universal, large frank

Nanking to USA, 19 August 1948
Universal, large frank

Nanking to USA, 30 July 1948, paying the international airmail rate of Chinese National Currency $170,000 in effect from 19 May to 1 August 1948.

One of two examples known with a slogan, which reads “Fast, fast, fast, Airmail is the fastest.”

NOTE: The date on this meter (30 VII 37) shows the number of years since the birth of the Chinese Republic in 1911. This eleven year difference from Western year dates is frequently found on meter stamps.
Universal, large frank

Unique proof from meter U23, Kweiyang 1.
No postally used examples are known.
Universal, large frank

A succeeding Universal essay moved the goose to the upper right. From here forward only design details remained to be approved.

Essay with manufacturer’s meter number “U36”.

Proof with manufacturer’s meter number “U28” and post office ID number (blocked).
Universal, large frank

To understand succeeding design changes, please look at the **denomination field** of the Universal Multi-Value.

- The four number banks in the middle are on wheels rotated to set the postage amount. The leftmost bank shows an asterisk when in the **zero** position.
- The **prefix** and **suffix** are immovable and are changed only by altering the print head.
- Four prefixes were used: $  *  *  *
- Fourteen different suffixes were used: from double zero to quad zero plus various Chinese characters up to the characters for 10,000 yuan (dollars).
Universal, large frank

Large Fen suffix 分

Between August and November 1948, the meter at Shanghai No. 4 was altered in two ways to reflect the change from Chinese National to the new Gold currency:

- the Dollar Sign prefix was changed to an asterisk
- the Double Zero suffix was replaced by the Large Fen character.

Matched pair of covers SHANGHAI No. 4 to Belgium and USA in December, 1948. This meter known used with Large Fen suffix one month only.
Universal, large frank

Formal Yuan suffix 圆

Gold currency succumbed to inflation quickly. By the close of 1948 the suffix on the few meters then in use were changed from the Large Fen (cent) to the Yuan (dollar).

Kweiyang No. 1 to Tsuni, Kweichow, 20 March, 1949.
50 Gold Yuan paid the domestic letter rate in effect from 11 March to 1 April, 1949.
Universal, large frank

Formal Yuan suffix 圆

This is the lone recorded example of the Canton No. 3 design with Formal Yuan suffix.

Cancelled Nan Hai, 3 Jan. (1950), this Communist Ren Min Bi currency usage ignored the formal Yuan suffix.
Universal, large frank

Formal Yuan suffix

No post office ID number.

S.Y. Sze, Physics Department, Science College, National Central University, Nanking, China.

Victor Animation Company, A Division of Crossess-Wright Corporation, New York, N.Y.

Nanking to USA, 29 March, 1949.

3100 Gold Yuan paid the basic international airmail rate in effect from 16 March to 1 April 1949.

This is one of two known examples of a Universal large frank stamp without an identification number.
Universal, large frank

Formal Yuan suffix  圓

In 1940 China imported a special Universal model called the Teltax. It was designed for franking telegrams but was used to frank domestic parcels during 1947. It was tested again in 1949 with the Formal Yuan suffix.

1949 test proof.

The Teltax stamp has angular value figures, and the town mark circle is lower.
Universal, large frank

Double Zero suffix

This was used with Gold currency stamps as well as the preceding Chinese National currency. As inflation of the Gold currency gathered speed, meter stamps continued to be modified. The meters at Canton Nos. 1 and 2 began using the double zero suffix in early April 1949.

Canton No. 1 2 April, 1949

Canton No. 1 known 2 to 26 April, 1949 in this state.

Canton No. 2

One of two examples known in this state.
Universal, large frank

Triple Zero suffix

Inflation added a zero to the Canton No. 1 suffix in late April 1949.

Canton No. 1 is the only meter known to have used the Triple Zero suffix.

Two examples are known, 25 and 29 April 1949.
Universal, large frank

Quad Zero suffix

Canton No. 2 skipped the triple zeros and went to a Quad Zero suffix probably in late April 1949. Although obviously meant for Gold currency, all known examples are dated 10 May to 13 June 1949 in the early Silver currency period.

Canton No. 2 to USA. 11 May 1949. $6,600,000

The rate for international airmail was 66 Silver cents on 11 May. For this mailing, the Gold era denomination was ignored and Silver currency was assumed.
Universal, large frank

Quad Zero suffix

During the difficult times in mid-1949 some postal clerks used meters to produce provisional stamps sold over the counter.

Tete-beche pair, bought in Canton and used on a 13 June 1949 mailing from Tai Shan, approximately 50 kilometers from Canton.
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan suffix 00/圓

Several meters were adapted to Gold currency inflation by adding a couple zeros to the Yuan suffix.

SHANGHAI No. 4 to United Nations IRO Evacuation Camp in the Philippines, 11 April 1949. Franked with $8000 in adhesives and a $15,300 meter stamp paying the $23,300 registered air mail rate in effect for five days from 11 to 16 April 1949.
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan suffix 00/圆

Franked with a mix of six provisional and one regular meter stamp, this 41,000 Yuan-franked cover was mailed from Swatow to Hong Kong on 12 December 1949.

Communist forces in Swatow continued to use Nationalist inscribed meter stamps for months after they gained control.
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan suffix 00/圜

This 25 January 1950 PRC mailing to the USA retained the Republican inscription.

SWATOW to USA, 25 January 1950.

Franked with 500 Yuan meter stamp plus 1300 Yuan in adhesives paying the 1800 Yuan basic PRC international airmail rate in effect 15 January to 10 February 1950.
Universal, large frank

1000 Yuan suffix 千/圆

Canton No. 3 used the suffix characters for 1000 Yuan at some point. Two examples are known, both loose tapes without town mark.
Universal, large frank

10,000 Yuan suffix 萬/圓

The final adaptation to Gold currency inflation was the use of a suffix indicating 10,000 Yuan.

Amoy No. 1

Chungking No. 1
Universal, large frank

10,000 Yuan suffix 萬/圓

Technically used in the early Silver currency period, this cover with the 10,000 (Gold) Yuan suffix was used only a few days before the fall of Shanghai to Communist forces.

SIIANGHAI No. 4 registered local cover, 4 May 1949.
Universal, large frank

Silver Currency

The Silver Yuan replaced the worthless Gold currency on 27 April 1949. The change was accommodated in Changsha by imposing the characters for Silver and Fen provisionally above and below the large (gold) yuan suffix.

Changsha to USA, 3 May 1949.
One of two known covers.
Universal, large frank

Dot below Large Fen suffix 十

Several locations used the Large Fen suffix with a dot added below to indicate the newer currency.

Amoy No. 1

Kweiyang Nos. 1 and 2 used numeric month instead of lettered month in the date.

Kunming No. 2

Double registered domestic cover, Kunming to Canton, 28 June 1949
Universal, large frank

Dot below Large Fen suffix 分

The meter at Swatow was used after takeover by Communist forces without regard to the currency indicator.

This cover was mailed from Swatow to Hong Kong on 16 November 1949, after Ren Min Bi currency had become effective.
Universal, large frank

Dot below Large Fen suffix

In Kweiyang meter stamps were sold over the counter during a shortage of traditional adhesives.

This block is currently the only known multiple.

Canton No. 1 was the only machine to use the Large Fen suffix without dot below for Silver currency.

Known 11 June to 2 July 1949
Universal, large frank

Small Fen suffix 分

A small version of the Fen suffix was used for Silver currency at Canton Nos. 3 and 4.

Registered cover to Hong Kong franked with tete-beche pair of 10¢ provisional silver currency stamps, Canton No. 3, cancelled HOI HAO, 27 June, 1949.

Universal, large frank

Small Li suffix

At Canton No. 3 the Fen character was replaced by a small Li.

Canton to USA, 12 August, 1949, mailed from Xin Chang, franked with 2.5 fen provisional meter stamp plus 40 fen in regular stamps.

It appears the Li suffix was ignored and the meter stamp was treated as 25 fen. This is still a ten fen overpayment of the prevailing 65 fen international airmail rate.
Universal, large frank

Large Li suffix 厘

Later in the Silver period Canton No. 4 changed from the Fen to a large Li character (1/10 cent).

Date appears to be September, 1949. Franking is with Silver Yuan and Unit Rate stamps plus the provisional meter stamp.

Seven examples of the Large Li suffix are recorded.
Universal, large frank

As the Republican government lost control, regional postal services sprang up. The East China area had meter stamps inscribed **East China Postal Administration.**

政郵東華

The earliest East China Universal stamp appeared in July 1949 and had an **Informal Yuan suffix** 元

SHANGHAI No. 4 local cover, 20 Sep. 1949

Known with this suffix from 12 July to 12 October 1949.

This is a turned cover.
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration

Informal Yuan suffix 元

SHANGHAI No. 4, international surface rate to England,
5 October 1949
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration,

Informal Yuan suffix 元

Nanking to Hong Kong,
27 September 1949

Every East China metered item known to exist is from Shanghai except for this unique cover from Nanking.
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration,

Zero plus Informal Yuan suffix 0 元

On 13 October a zero was added to the suffix on the SHANGHAI No.4 design.

The Secretary,
Cathay Grand Corporation,
216, Jarking Road (Western),
SHANGHAI.

Shanghai local cover, 28 November 1949, franked with the 400 Yuan local rate.

Shanghai No. 4 known with this suffix from 13 October to 3 December 1949.
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration,

Double Zero plus Informal Yuan suffix 00/元

Continued inflation forced another zero to the SHANGHAI No. 4 suffix in January 1950.

Shanghai to England, 25 April 1950.

Franked with 28,500 Yuan, the international airmail double-weight rate from 5 March to 15 July 1950.

Shanghai No. 4 known with this suffix from 30 January to 8 July, 1950.
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration,

Double Zero plus Informal Yuan suffix 00/元

The Shanghai No. 9 meter was unknown before this item was found. The town mark contains no English and uses a numeric month.

22 March 1950

Presently the only recorded example of Shanghai No. 9 with this suffix.
Universal, large frank

East China Postal Administration,

Double Zero plus Formal Yuan suffix 00/圆

The last East China Universal design had suffix Double Zero over Formal Yuan.

WUSIH No. 1 to Shanghai, 18 November 1949

Currently the only example known of an East China meter stamp with this suffix.
Universal, large frank

Peoples Republic of China

The first Universal with a PRC inscription appeared with a 4-character inscription for Peoples Postal Service.

政郵民人

and had a Double Zero over Formal Yuan suffix 00/圆

Tientshui to Shanghai, 10 August 1950

Tientshui No. 1 was the only meter to have this arrangement.

Two examples known.
Universal, large frank

The only other PRC meter design with the 4-character country inscription (政郵民人) had suffix Double Zero over Informal Yuan 00/元

Kweiyang No. 1 to Shanghai, 9 November 1951. 3200 Yuan paid the domestic letter rate for 60 - 80 grams.

Two examples known.
Universal, large frank

The 4-character inscription is quickly replaced by Chinese Peoples Postal Service, 政郵民人國中

All PRC designs from here on have the 6-character inscription.

Luichow No. 1 to Shanghai, 12 August 1951, 800 Yuan domestic letter rate

Luichow No. 1 to Shanghai, 15 September 1951, 300 Yuan out-of-town printed matter rate.
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan suffix 00/圓

Tienshan No. 1 to Shanghai, 3 June 1951.
Franked with 2000 yuan paying the registered letter rate.
Universal, large frank

PRC

An early casualty of the PRC administration was the flying goose emblem. By the end of 1950 it is banished from all PRC meter stamps.

This is the earliest known Universal stamp without the goose emblem.

Shanghai No. 4 to England, 20 July 1950, franked with 14500 Yuan paying the international airmail rate in effect 15 July to 16 August 1950.
Universal, large frank  

The Shanghai No. 7 meter was unknown before these parcel post receipts were discovered in 1994.

Double Zero over Informal Yuan suffix  00/元

26 April 1951 and 12 September 1953
Universal, large frank   PRC

The Hangchow No. 1 meter was also unknown before this parcel post receipt was found.

Double Zero over Informal Yuan suffix 00/元

28 February 1953
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Informal Yuan suffix

The Hengyang stamp on this document is unique

The Wusih stamp on this document is one of three known
Universal, large frank PRC

For Nanking No. 6 the flying goose was incompletely removed. A wing remains in the top right corner.

Double Zero over Informal Yuan suffix 00/元

Parcel post receipt, 31 January 1953

Portion of parcel post receipt with 50 Yuan in adhesives stamps added, 12 May 1953.
Universal, large frank  

Double Zero over Formal Yuan 00/圆
Several post offices used this suffix in their meter stamps.

Swatow No. 1 to Penang, Malaya, 6 August 1950
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan

One of the meters in Canton also used this suffix.

Parcel post receipt, 12 May, 1954

This is the only known example
Universal, large frank

Double Zero over Formal Yuan 00/圆

Soochow No. 1 had Chinese only in the town mark.

Parcel post receipt, 12 December 1954
Universal, large frank

The Kunming No. 2 meter is the first to add a star in the upper right of the frank. ★

Double Zero over Formal Yuan 00/圆

Kunming to Shanghai, 19 March 1953, franked with 1600 Yuan paying the domestic double-weight airmail rate.
Universal, large frank  

A lone machine, Tsainan No. 1, adopted the characters for 100 Yuan as the suffix.

百元

Parcel post receipt, 8 March 1953.

Presently the only known imprint of any meter stamp from Tsainan before the modern period.
Universal, large frank  

PRC

Wusih parcel post receipt fragment, 27 June 1951

This document is franked with adhesive issues totalling $19,900. The meter stamp appears to have a double zero over Yuan suffix which would give it a franking value of $50,000. But this adds up to $69,900, and the document clearly indicates the postage was $519,900.

Either there was another $450,000 in adhesive stamps, or the meter stamp has a suffix of double zeros over the characters for 1000 Yuan.
Universal, large frank

A meter stamp design from Canton reverted to the dollar sign prefix and the double zero suffix.

$ - 00

This 3 August 1954 parcel post receipt is the only recorded example of a Canton meter stamp in this state.
Universal, large frank

Perhaps the currency reform of 1 Jan. 1955 prompted basic changes in the Universal stamp. The POSTAGE PAID characters are moved from the bottom to the right, a star is added at left, the characters for Yuan and Fen appear at the bottom, and the suffix disappears.

SHANGHAI No. 7 to France, 30 July 1957,
franked with the 52 Fen basic international airmail rate.

SHANGHAI No. 9 has Western rather than Roman month.
Universal, large frank

PRC

Nanking No. 6 is the only machine to include the character Jiao 角 (10 cent piece) between the Yuan (dollar) and Fen (cent) characters.

Parcel post receipt, 17 March 1956
Universal, large frank  

PRC

After currency reform the Teltax (Shanghai No. 5) was used for letter mail instead of parcel post. Its new frank contained a solid star prefix.

Shanghai to Paris, 24 July 1959
Universal, large frank

A few Universals near the end of the classic period had inner boxes inserted around the value figures.

Canton No. 4 to Denmark, 28 July, 1959

Kunming No. 6 parcel post receipt, 20 July 1958
Swatow No. 1 to Hong Kong, 24 February 1961. Franked with the 48 Fen basic international airmail rate.
Since the 1955 currency reform all Universal stamps have country inscription (top six characters) reading left to right. The lone exception was the meter in Hengyang.

The cover below is the only known example.
Pitney Bowes entered the Chinese market in 1948 with eight machines: four in Shanghai, one each in Beijing, Hangchow and Nanking, and one still unknown.

This essay of 1947 was an early alternative to the flying goose design.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

Progressive denomination wheel proofs from January 1948
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

Unique proof with town name NANKING

Frame proof
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

The earliest issued Pitney Bowes design had a dollar sign prefix and the characters for Gold Yuan as suffix.

Shanghai No. 1, 31 March 1949

This fragment is one of two known examples of the earliest Pitney Bowes flying goose design, with dollar sign prefix and Gold Yuan suffix.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

From here forward all PB flying goose stamps have an asterisk prefix.

**Suffix: characters for 100 Yuan 百/圆**

SHANGHAI to Hong Kong, 20 April 1949.
Franked with 19,500 Gold Yuan. This is the correct rate for a double weight double-registered air express letter mailed between 17 and 28 April 1949.

Note the misspelled cancellation CHANGHAI.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

Suffix: characters for 100 Yuan 百/圓

NANKING No. 3, 1 Dec. 1953

This tape is special in two ways:
- It is the only known stamp from the machine,
- It was used with Republican inscriptions three years after establishment of the PRC.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

Suffix: characters for 10,000 Yuan

Machines at Shanghai Nos. 2 and 8 had this suffix.

SHANGHAI No. 8, 24 May 1949
Known in this state 4 to 24 May, 1949

WILLIAM TAG
P. O. BOX 1306
SHANGHAI

Mesers. CARE,
50 Broadstreet,
New York, N.Y.,

U. S. A.

SHANGHAI No. 2 to USA, 9 May, 1949
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

East China Postal Service

Pitney Bowes stamps with this inscription are first used with the informal Yuan character as suffix.

元

SHANGHAI No. 2, 23 June 1949, franked with the 15 yuan (RMB) local rate.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

East China Postal Service

Inflation adds a zero to the Informal Yuan suffix 0/元

Sandpaper Inc.,
Park Building, 1st Main St.,
Worcester 8, Mass.
U.S.A.

Shanghai No. 8 to USA, 20 December 1949

International surface printed matter rate

A regretful case of hasty scissors.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

East China Postal Service
Suffix: Inflation added a zero to the Informal Yuan 0/元

Above: Chinaco meter number.
Shanghai No. 8 (八), 19 January 1950.

Right: Western meter number.
Shanghai No. 3, 26 November 1949.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

East China Postal Service

The final PB flying goose East China design has suffix character for 100 over informal Yuan.

百/元

Used by Shanghai No. 1 and No. 8

Shanghai No. 8 airmail to USA, 31 March 1950

Franked with 15,800 Yuan paying the basic international airmail rate in effect 5 March to 14 July, 1950.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

East China Postal Service

Suffix: 百/元

Shanghai No. 1 to Kunming, 4 May 1950, franked with 5000 Yuan paying the registered express rate in force 11 March to 11 May 1950.

The express slip on the reverse is a Republican leftover.
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

The first Pitney Bowes PRC design was inscribed with 6-characters for Chinese Peoples Postal Service and had 100 Yuan suffix 百/元 used with three meters: SHANGHAI Nos. 1, 2 and 8

SHANGHAI NO. 1

to Soochow.
7 July, 1951, 800 Yuan domestic letter rate.

to USA,
4 May, 1951, 13,000 Yuan international airmail rate
Pitney Bowes, flying goose

100 Yuan suffix

SHANGHAI No. 8

parcel post receipt, 16 October, 1953

to USA, 22 July, 1950, 2800 yuan international surface rate
Pitney Bowes, flying goose  

PRC

Suffix: 百/元

Shanghai No. 2 differs from the others. The machine number is left instead of right of the town name abbreviation.

(二) 泥

Shanghai to Soochow, 9 March 1952. Franked with the 2000 Yuan registered letter rate.
Suffix: 百/元

Shanghai No. 3 differs from the others in that it has a Western meter number.

Parcel post receipt, 3 May 1952.
Suffix: 百/元

The characters for Chinese Peoples Postal Service are reversed in the top panel on this stamp from Hangchow.

Chekiang Hangchow, parcel post receipt, 20 July 1954

One of two examples known of this stamp
The four Pitney Bowes meters in Shanghai were given new stamp designs in the mid-1950s, presumably in tandem with currency reform in 1955.

SHANGHAI No. 1 to Switzerland, 30 November 1957

84 Fen paid the registered airmail rate to Western Europe via Czechoslovakia.

Note the reversed date with year at left.
Pitney Bowes, straight-line frank

PRC

SHANGHAI No. 2
registered airmail to Europe, 20 August 1960
Shanghai No. 3 to Canada, 6 June 1959.
Franked with the 52 fen international airmail rate.

Shanghai No. 3 to Switzerland, 10 March 1965, 37 fen, reduced “commercial paper” international airmail rate.
Shanghai No. 8, 6 December 1964, 8 fen local rate

Shanghai No. 8 to Switzerland, 1 August 1964, 52 fen international airmail rate
Pitney Bowes, faux perforations

The only Pitney Bowes meter in Beijing was used from 1957 to 1959 on foreign mail only.

Two 1957 registered airmail covers to Amsterdam, 260 fen for 60 grams and 114 fen for 20 grams.
Hasler, flying goose

A single Swiss Hasler meter was delivered to China in 1948.

Shanghai No. 6, parcel post receipt, 18 February 1949

This document is the only evidence in existence showing the Hasler meter was used before the PRC era.
Hasler, flying goose

During the PRC era the Hasler meter stamp design underwent several changes.

The first was no different from the Republican stamp except for the Chinese Peoples Postal Service inscription at top.

This tape is one of three examples known.

On 22 October 1951 the $ prefix was changed to a Yen sign ¥, and the Western ID number was replaced by its Chinese equivalent.

This tape is one of five examples known.

Sometime between 1951 and 1957 the simulated perforation border was removed, and denomination symbols were added at upper right: yuan ($), jiao (10¢), fen (¢).

This tape is unique.
Hasler, straight-line frank

Two new Hasler meters were brought to China around 1961 and were installed in Shanghai as machines 10 (+) and 11 (±)

Shanghai No. 10, local Cultural Revolution cover with inscription at UL: Communism is the central power to lead us in our basic theory of Marx and Lenin

Shanghai No. 10, 14 November 1974, registered airmail to Ghana
Hasler, straight-line frank

SHANGHAI No 10

Airmail covers to Kuwait and the Sudan, both returned to sender

CHINA NATIONAL METALS AND MINERALS IMPORT AND EXPORT CORPORATION
SHANGHAI BRANCH
27 CHUNGHAN ROAD (E. 1) SHANGHAI, CHINA

M/S. Mohammed G. A. Ashkanani,
P. O. Box 21947, Salmiya,
Kuwait.

VIA AIR MAIL

CHINA NATIONAL METALS AND MINERALS IMPORT AND EXPORT CORPORATION
SHANGHAI BRANCH
67 CHUNGHAN ROAD (E. 1) SHANGHAI, CHINA

REGISTERED
VIA AIR MAIL

RETOUR
Hasler, straight-line frank

SHANGHAI No. 11

Airmail to Germany, 1961

Very late use, 12 October 1982, local registered cover
Hasler, straight-line frank  PRC

The final change that took place to one of the classic period meters occurred sometime between 1979 and April 1981. The Shanghai No. 10 Hasler die was re-engraved. Both inner and outer frames were narrowed.

China National Metals and Minerals Import and Export Corporation
Shanghai Branch
27 Chungshan Road (E. 1), Shanghai, China

Heinrich Feuer
Caja No. 418
Cochabamba, Bolivia.

VIA AIR MAIL

Shanghai to Bolivia, 3 April 1981
One of two covers known of the re-engraved design.